

ORIGINAL EDITION DELTA

House Rules Compatible With Original D&D

PLAYER'S RULES (V. 1.0.6)¹

RACES

Humans: Unlimited level advancement.

Dwarves: Infravision 60', resist magic +4, dodge giants +4, find stone traps +1.

Elves: Multi-classed, infravision 60', hide in woods (4 in 6), find wood traps +1.

Halflings: Hide in woods (4 in 6), resist magic +4, ranged attacks +4.²

CLASSES

Fighters: Use heavy armor, all weapons, fighter feats; attack bonus +1, hit points d8 per level (hp +3/level after name).

Thieves: Use light armor, light weapons, thief skills; attack bonus +2/3, hit points d6 per level (hp +2/level after name).

Wizards: Use no armor, dagger only, magic spells; attack bonus +1/2, hit points d4 per level (hp +1/level after name).

ALIGNMENT

Three Alignments: Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic. New characters should list either Lawful or Neutral (if Chaotic, secretly inform the DM).³

ABILITIES

Random Abilities: At first level, roll one selected ability 2d6+6, others 3d6 in order. For starting hit dice, re-roll any results of "1" or "2".⁴

EQUIPMENT

Starting Money: Starting money (3d6×10) and equipment prices are in silver pieces. Chain mail costs 50, plate 200; a silver dagger 30, potion of healing 200, potion of mithridate 1000; rumors 10-60, ads for hires 100 sp each.⁵

TARGET 20

Core Mechanic: For most combat actions, roll d20 + level + modifiers, with success indicated on a total of 20 or more.⁶

ABILITY MODIFIERS

Values: See table to the right for standard modifiers. The sequence continues in each direction (1 point modifier for each 3 ability score points).⁷

Effects: Strength: melee attacks and damage. Intelligence: secret door and trap detection. Wisdom: mental-attack saves. Dexterity: missile attacks and armor class. Constitution: hit die rolls. Charisma: reaction rolls.

Score	Modifier
3-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	0
13-15	+1
16-18	+2
19-21	+3
22-24	+4

FIGHTER FEATS

Feats: Fighters can select one feat every 4 levels (starting at 4th) to expand their combat abilities. See the section later for available feats.

THIEF SKILLS

Skills: Thieves have the ability to (1) open locks, (2) remove traps, (3) pick pockets, (4) move silently, and (5) hide in shadows. Success requires rolling $d20 + \text{level} + \text{Dex modifier}$, and scoring 20 or more (3 tries allowed per target). Thieves add +1 to hear noise and climb wall checks, and score double damage from a silent attack from behind. These bonuses increment every 4 levels.⁸

WIZARD SPELLS

Spells: Wizards start with a spellbook containing all 1st-level spells. Only one instance of a given spell can be memorized at a time (no duplicates). Adding a new spell from a book or scroll takes a roll of $d20 + \text{level} + \text{Int modifier}$, scoring 20 or more; this takes one day per spell level (3 tries allowed per spell). Researching a new spell takes one week per spell level, with the same check, and costs as in Vol-1 (each added increment gives a +4 bonus to the roll).⁹

MOVE RATES

Scale: One turn is 1 minute. One round is 10 seconds. One inch is 5 feet (also called one "pace").¹⁰

Encumbrance: Gear carried is measured in stone weight. See table to the right for values.¹¹

Movement: Characters can carry stone weight of up to 1/3 their Strength score at 12" move rate; up to 2/3 at 9"; and up to full Strength at 6".¹²

Items	Weight
Light weapon, helmet, bow, arrows, rope, skins, spikes, torches, lantern	1/3
Medium or heavy weapon, leather, shield, staff, pole, rations, 1K coins	1
Chain mail	2
Plate mail	4

WEAPONS

See the matrix below for melee weapon damage and special effects. ¹³

Type	Size		
	Light	Medium	Heavy
Sword	Dagger (1d4)	Sword (1d8)	2-H Sword (1d10)
Spear	Spear (1d6)	Polearm (1d8)	Lance/Pike (1d8) *
Axe	Hand Axe (1d6)	Battle Axe (1d8)	Halberd (1d10)
Club	Mace (1d6)	Morning Star (1d8)	Flail (1d8) **

Types: Swords can be drawn and used in a single round. Spears can be used to attack from a second rank. Axes get +2 to hit targets in medium or heavy armor. Clubs get +4 to hit heavy armor. ¹⁴

Sizes: Light weapons are one-handed, and can be thrown 60 feet. Medium weapons (except polearms) are one-handed for man-sized creatures. Heavy weapons and polearms are two-handed for men. ¹⁵

Specials: (*) Lances do double damage when used from a charging mount; pikes get double damage when set against such a charge. (**) Flails ignore any opponent shield bonuses. ¹⁶

Missile Weapons: Bows and slings fire every round; crossbows every other round. Attack rolls are -1 per 10 feet range. Damage is 1d6 for arrows and quarrels, 1d4 for sling stones. ¹⁷

Race/Class Restrictions: Halflings can only use light or medium (two-handed) melee weapons, slings, shortbows, and light crossbows. Thieves are skilled in light melee weapons, normal swords, slings, and light crossbows. ¹⁸

COMBAT

Surprise: A roll of 2 in 6 normally indicates surprise. Unseen parties (hidden, invisible, elven cloak) add +2. Silenced parties (motionless, undead, move silently) add +2. Warning (e.g., light, noise, magic detection) foils surprise. ¹⁹

Initiative: Roll d6 initiative for each side; play goes around the table. On each player's turn they can move, then attack, in that order. Figures must stand still to cast spells, fire missiles, or set pikes. ²⁰

Attacks: Attacks are made by rolling d20 + attack bonus + AC of target and scoring 20 or more. Monsters use their hit dice for attack bonus.

Saves: Saving throws are made by rolling d20 + level + modifiers (see table) and scoring 20 or more. ²¹

Type	Modifier
Spells	0
Breath	+1
Stone	+2
Wands	+3
Death	+4

FIGHTER FEATS

1. **Berserking:** In melee, roll d20 over Int to rage: gain +4 to hit and saves for 1d6 turns (cannot withdraw; like penalties for an hour after).²²
2. **Great Cleave:** The character gains a bonus attack when they drop an enemy in melee (which may chain for yet more attacks).
3. **Great Fortitude:** The character gains a +4 bonus to saves against poison, disease, and death.
4. **Great Strength:** The character adds +2 to Strength.
5. **Iron Will:** The character gains a +4 bonus to saves against mental attacks (including charm, fear, illusions, etc.)
6. **Mounted Combat:** When mounted the character gets +2 to all attacks, and +4 to checks for and against being unhorsed.
7. **Rapid Shot:** Add one attack per round with any missile weapon.
8. **Rapid Strike:** Add one attack per round with any melee weapon.
9. **Survival:** The character gains a +2 bonus to checks to find food, water, shelter, or avoid being lost in the wilderness.
10. **Toughness:** The character gains +2 hit points per level.
11. **Two-Weapon Fighting:** The character can fight with a light weapon in the off hand, for an extra attack or a parry (+2 AC) each round.²³
12. **Weapon Specialization:** Pick one specific weapon, and gain +2 to hit and damage with that weapon.²⁴

MULTI-CLASSING

Adding Classes: Elves automatically start with the wizard class, plus one more of their choice. To add a new class, a character needs a score of 16 or more in the new prime requisite, and must sacrifice 1,000 XP.²⁵

Experience: After each adventure, the character applies all earned XP to a single class of their choice.²⁶

Benefits: The multi-classed character uses the best entry for armor, weapons, attacks, and saves. Hit points are rolled for each class, with the highest being used. Fighter/wizards may cast spells in leather or chain (melee weapon in one hand, no shield). Thief skills are restricted to leather armor only.²⁷

Original Edition Delta is compatible with Original D&D (1974) and similar game systems. For more information, and free updates to these rules, visit: www.OEDGames.com.



NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This document is available for free at www.oedgames.com. These endnotes are intended for (a) DMs who want to check on reasoning, justifications, and history of the game, and (b) the author himself, so he doesn't keep redoing the same research repeatedly. The document is designed to allow printing only pages 1-4 for players at the table; that is, using a single letter-sized sheet of paper, and without endnotes. For various citations of the associated blog, visit deltasdnd.blogspot.com.
2. Traps here include secret doors, compartments, etc., of the appropriate material. Dwarf +4 dodge bonus is as per AD&D (PHB, p. 16), and statistically more in line with the Chainmail half-hits ability (CM p. 29) than lower values. Halfling ranged modifier echoes the bonus of +3 seen in Sup-I (Errata) and AD&D (MM, p. 50), here rounded to +4 to match other combat bonuses. (Tolkien refers to hobbits as "keen-eyed and sure at the mark"; see blog 1/1/18.) See also [OD&D Discussion](#). The elf rule on multi-classing was the result of a poll (see blog 10/18/10; 48% agreement). Infravision is noted starting with *Chainmail* p. 43 (Fantasy Reference Table).
3. New players may need clarification on alignments. Lawful PCs want civilization peaceful and expanding; Chaotic want civilization broken down and destroyed; Neutral seek a balance, or are simply disinterested. See works of Anderson (*Three Hearts and Three Lions*) and Moorcock; blog 2/23/11 and 10/23/14. Note that creatures hearing an opposing alignment language automatically attack (Vol-1, p. 12). Gygax in *The Strategic Review* (TSR) #6, re: law/chaos vs. good/evil, says, "When that was written they meant just about the same thing in my mind" (same as Anderson, Ch. 12). In *Dragon* #9 he remarks on the possibility of reporting a fake alignment.
4. These boosts reflect the natural-selection effect observed for those surviving 0-level. See blog posts 8/7/14 and 5/4/15.
5. Compare the copper, silver, gold pieces to English pence, groats, and nobles (respectively $\frac{1}{8}$ s and $\frac{1}{4}$ L). Note that pounds and shillings were never medieval coins (see blog 3/30/10, 5/19/10). Statistical analysis suggests that D&D gp has purchasing power of about a half-shilling (see blog 6/3/19). Following groat value, we take historical shilling values and multiply by 3 for our sp standard (e.g., done for armor here). For silver weapons history, see blog 1/25/16. Costs for ads & rumors are from Vol-3, p. 23. Potion prices are roughly the base manufacture prices in both OD&D and AD&D, assuming alchemist help to reduce the cost (see blog 8/17/20).
6. For more information on the Target 20 mechanical system, visit the website at: www.oedgames.com/target20.
7. The 3d6 ability distribution has a standard deviation of about 3 (2.96), so this modifier represents the statistical z-score (number of standard deviations from the mean).
8. Per Sup-I, "remove traps" deals only with small devices (poison needles, etc.). No special reading abilities are included here. Thief skills should not

trigger traps, etc., except possibly if a natural 1 is rolled. Achieving silent backstab position takes a full round before the attack. Compare the 3 tries rule to listening for noises in AD&D (DMG p. 60).

9. Reasons for no duplication of spells: (1) More like stories of Jack Vance (*Dying Earth*), (2) more balanced (no squatting on an overpowered spell), (3) more interesting variety of effects in-game, (4) easier bookkeeping (by cards or checklist). Note that in Gyga modules usually only a few cleric spells (*cures*) are duplicated in practice. Compare to a dramatic treatment where any power/trick usually gets used only once per episode.

Checks for adding spells from a scroll are harder than in AD&D (PHB p. 10), but can be retried here; the one day/level is as per DMG p. 117. The given check for research matches the chances in Vol-1, p. 34 at 1st level. We considered a penalty for increasing spell level (as per DMG p. 119), but found it to be too restrictive. Costs assume no special resources; if a library is available, then reduce cost by half. Recommend that the DM keep a list of spell-learning failures at a given level (retry at level-up).

10. The time scale matches original *Chainmail* turns of 1 minute, with a shorter round increment for melee (e.g., *Chainmail* Fatigue rules); see blog 7/9/12. The 1" = 5 feet scale (a) matches the 30mm figure scale, (b) matches the 1/6 time scale adjustment, and (c) makes the *Chainmail* man-to-man missile-fire chances reasonable (not so at larger scale); see blog 8/27/18. Compare to other TSR/Gyga games in the same year as OD&D, *Warriors of Mars* and *Boot Hill*, which have 1 turn = 10 seconds, 1" = 6 feet scales. The "pace" considered here is the Roman pace. There is no change in units for man-to-man action indoors-vs-outdoors; see blog 8/20/18.
11. For the benefits of stone units for encumbrance, see blog (4/15/07, 9/29/10). The DM should occasionally audit PC encumbrance post-game.
12. The base combat speed is equivalent to a jog (4 mph = 6 ft/sec); walking would be half speed, running double. No bonus for "charge" movement.
13. Damage parameters are basically the same as in the Sup-I variant (counting Man-sized only), or Moldvay Basic. See blog 2/24/09, 4/8/14.
14. Weapon details are inspired by rules in *Chainmail*, Supplement-I, and TSR #1-2. We assume non-swords take a round to draw & ready. Spear advantage is traditionally first attack; we find that awkward at the D&D table, and so replace it with back-rank access, but the DM may wish to grant a first attack otherwise; also, we relax the prohibition on pole arms/pikes in dungeons (say, 6'/10' max length; contrast with Sup-I, p. 15). Gyga supports this in *Dragon #24* ("The center rank characters will also be able to engage in hand-to-hand combat if they have equipped themselves with spears or thrusting pole arms which are of size useful in the surroundings."). Axe & club modifiers vs. armor in CM/Sup-I tend to be on the order of +1/+2, which we double for the CM-to-D&D conversion. We apply these bonuses vs. animals or beasts with tough hide (AC 5 or better; see DMG p. 28, "horny or bony armor might be classed as plate mail..."), but not extradimensional, fey, or undead monsters. Simple wooden weapons (e.g., like a staff or a

- monster's crude club) should *not* get these bonuses. The halberd represents any two-handed poleaxe-type weapon (bardiche, lochaber axe, etc.; TSR #2, p. 6). A hammer or military pick is equivalent to a mace (Sup-I, p. 15).
15. In *Chainmail* (p. 10) throwing ranges for axes and spears were given as 3" = 90 ft, javelins 6" = 180 ft. In Vol-2 (p. 31) ranges were given the same 3", i.e., only 30 feet indoors. Modern axe-throwing target competitions are held at 15, 20, or 30 feet; Olympic distance records for shot put around 60 ft, javelin 270 ft (Wikipedia). We use 60 ft here as the maximum (reasonable with 10 foot ceiling, per author calculation). See also [Milks](#), et. al.
 16. *Chainmail* gives charging horses a bonus of 1 die per figure (see p. 17, "impetus"). Spears get double damage vs. charge in Vol-2 (p. 31) and Sup-I (p. 15). AD&D PHB gives double damage to lances & spears (p. 37). Cook Expert gives double damage to lances. Set pikes should interrupt a charge against them; Ffoulkes, *Armour & Weapons*, notes pikes would have a special spike in the end to stick in the ground and resist cavalry (Ch. 7). Flail effect is taken from Wikipedia.
 17. Rates of fire are interpolated from mass *Chainmail*, where bows fire 2/turn, light crossbows 1/turn, and heavy crossbows ½/turn (when standing). Ranges and accuracy dropoff are calibrated from real-world data, physical model, and computer simulation (see blog articles 8/30/10, 3/7/11, 4/14/14, 2/16/15, 8/6/18, 8/13/18, 2/4/19, 3/4/19; simulator on [GitHub](#)). Technically, a penalty that follows a logistic function would be best, but the simple -1 per 10 feet is a fair approximation in the range of greatest interest. In theory, we could also give armor bonuses vs. missiles for leather (blog 5/6/11), or large shields (say +2; see DMG p. 28, or SCA archery materials). Slings are considered very effective with training (observed by Gygas in TSR #7; see also blog 5/29/17).
 18. For sizes, see AD&D PHB notes (p. 19) and also 3E size rules. Thief weapons vary greatly by edition (see blog 6/12/17).
 19. Parties with light never surprise monsters except via a door (Vol-3, p. 9). Auto-initiative seems implied in Vol-3, p. 10 (wyvern example), but this is counter-indicated by examples in TSR #2 (p. 3), B/X, AD&D, etc. Undead are always silent (Vol-3, p. 9; Sup-II, p. 1).
 20. OD&D has no book rule for initiative; *Chainmail* had opposed d6's but then intermingled phases (p. 9); TSR #2 seems to have the first round-by-round d6 team initiative as we know (FAQ, p. 3, modified by Dexterity). Around-the-table turn sequence is asserted by Gygas (in context of ~20 players at table) in ENWorld Q&A, 2/14/05. Move restrictions are similar to those in *Chainmail* and *Swords & Spells*. Optionally, the DM could permit throwing weapons in the same direction as a forward move. We do not give a free attack against one disengaging from melee (see blog 8/23/18).
 21. This mechanic for saves is somewhat harsher at the lowest levels, and more generous at the highest levels, than Vol-1. Wizards/thieves should get -2 to breath, wands, and death, but this was always dropped in play. See blog

- 9/3/09 for charts and analysis regarding the saving throw tables in Vol-1. See [OD&D Discussion](#) for various interpretations of the save categories.
22. Compare to berserkers in Vol-2 (p. 6), berserker class in *Dragon #3* (p. 27), followers of Odin and Tyr in Sup-IV (p. 22, 24), and the 3E Barbarian. See also blog comments 9/5/17.
 23. Parrying is in *Chainmail* (p. 25-26); note the value is more than a shield.
 24. These feats first appeared as “Warrior Boons” in *Fight On! Magazine #9* (Spring 2010). The intent is to consolidate fighter options like extraordinary strength (Sup-I, p. 7), multiple attacks (AD&D PHB p. 25), weapon specialization (UA p. 18), various subclasses (ranger, barbarian, cavalier), etc. Note that each feat here has the effect of two 3E-style feats.
 25. The 1,000 XP matches the zero-level increment (see Judge’s Book). Paul S. reports players taking 2nd class early and leaving it at 0 XP; but not enforcing the 16 ability requirement (from Vol-1, p. 10).
 26. This is our take on the classic “freely switch class... but not during the course of a single game” rule (Vol-1, p. 8). This is a fairly common interpretation among OD&D players (see [OD&D Discussion](#)).
 27. Consider the many examples of Gygaxian elven fighter/wizards in chain but not plate; e.g., throughout the GDQ modules, and also encounters in the *World of Greyhawk* (1983 boxed set Glossography p. 4). AD&D 2E gave a rule for multiclass wizards to cast only in elven chain; an online poll showed that a majority of AD&D 1E DMs follow this same rule (see blog 7/21/19).